



BORJA-BORGIA:
ITINERARY OF A
UNIVERSAL FAMILY



Castellnovo

Index

Following the Borgia

The Borgia and their time

Calixtus III

Alexander VI

Saint Francisco de Borja

Cesare Borgia

Lucrezia Borgia

Maria Enriquez de Luna

Castellново

The city and its history

Places of interest

Civil Architecture

Castle of Beatriz de Borja

Arab Cistern

Tower del Mal Paso

Off route

Calvary

Hermitage of San Antón

Hermitage of San Antonio de Padua

Hermitage of San Cristóbal

Church of los Santos Reyes

Place of la Mina



BORJA-BORGIA:
ITINERARY OF A
UNIVERSAL FAMILY

Following the Borgia

"Discover the legacy of the Borgia through this cultural tourism travel guide based on the lineage of this family of universal impact."

"Borja/Borgia: itinerary of a universal family" is a cultural tourism guide that brings together biographies, stories of the time, cities, places and cultural proposals, which value the story and history of this family of Valencian origin, of undoubted international attraction.

The Borgia and their time

Travel back in time and discover the daily life, culture and social rules of this unique historical period.

Calixtus III

Alfonso de Borja begins the legacy of the dynasty by becoming Pope Calixtus III.



Calixtus III

Alfonso de Borja, future Pope Callixtus III, was born in the small town of Canals (Valencia) on December 31, 1378. His parents, Domingo de Borja, a local landowner without noble lineage, and Francisca de Borja, baptized him in nearby Xàtiva. Alfonso was the only male, and was followed by four sisters: Isabel, Juana, Catalina and Francisca.

At the age of fourteen, he began his studies in Lleida, where he obtained a doctorate in canon law (1411) and in civil law (1413).

The anecdote in which, in his youth, he had an encounter with the preacher Vicente Ferrer, who predicted that he would be pope and that thanks to his intermediation he would be canonized, is well known and notorious. These events ended up taking place.

In 1417 he entered the royal chancellery, becoming one of the closest advisers to the monarch Alfonso the Magnanimous, intervening in the affairs of the Western schism that still survived in Peñíscola, receiving in compensation the rectorate of the church of San Nicolás de Valencia (1419).

Alfonso the Magnanimous incorporated him into his entourage in Italy (1420) and he was granted the archdeaconship of Xàtiva and the rectory of L'Alghero (Sardinia).

Alfonso de Borja intervenes successfully in the definitive resolution of the schism of Peñíscola (1429), which continued in the person of Gil Sánchez Muñoz, successor of Benedict XIII with the name of Clement VIII, obtaining his resignation. In reward he receives the bishopric of Valencia (1429), a city in which he will have little presence due to his obligations to the crown.

On July 24, 1438, he set sail for Italy in the company of the royal bastard, Ferdinand (future Ferrante I of Naples), of whom he was tutor. After the conquest of the Neapolitan capital by Alfonso the Magnanimous in 1442, Alfonso de Borja

collaborated in the legal organization of the new kingdom.

His ecclesiastical career took a qualitative leap when he was appointed cardinal (1444) with the title of the Four Crowned Saints, and moved his residence to Rome, a city where his surname was altered, becoming the latinized Borgia. From that moment on, the Latin form will be the one with which the part of the family settled in Italy is known, while those who remained in the Peninsula or returned to it would continue to be called Borja.

Away from pomp and circumstance, he will maintain a prudent and simple life, preserving his prestige as an eminent jurist. Around 1449 he claimed the help of his nephews Pedro Luis and Rodrigo de Borja, and Luis Juan del Milà, who would end up obtaining numerous ecclesiastical benefits.

On the death of Nicholas V, Alfonso de Borja was elected Pope on April 8, 1455 under the name of Callixtus III. An unexpected election of the neutral candidate, favored by the fights between the Orsini and the Colonna. A non-Italian Pope: Spanish and Catalan. His provenance rivalled that of the French in unpopularity. The Catalans dominated Sicily and Naples and harassed the galleys of various Italian republics and principalities.

His pontificate focused on three aspects: the fight against the Turks, which did not arouse great enthusiasm, the defense of the inherited political balance, and the consolidation of papal authority in the Papal States. From his new dignity, the process of canonization of Saint Vicente Ferrer concluded.

Callixtus III had several clashes with his former protector, Alfonso the Magnanimous. The most notorious: the refusal to grant him a divorce from Queen María and the ratification of Ferrante as successor to the monarch. The accusations and threats were a constant between the two.

The Pope used relatives and compatriots to limit the power of

the powerful Roman families. His nephews Rodrigo and Luis Juan would end up being cardinals (1456) despite his youth, and Pedro Luis, captain general of the Church. This behavior earned him numerous criticisms for his excessive nepotism.

During the summer of 1458, the pope's state of health suffers. His legs are swollen and his pain forces him to remain prostrate. The end is expected. Borgia properties are raided and looted, but his nephew Rodrigo, in a display of cool self-control, remains by his side. The palace under construction in Rome is stormed and completely destroyed.

On August 6 Callixtus III expires and his remains are buried in the chapel of Santa Maria della Febbre, attached to the Vatican basilica. Later they will be transferred to their current resting place in the church of Montserrat in Rome.

His nephew Rodrigo will manage, decades later, to vindicate and increase the legacy of the Borgias.

Alexander VI

His figure, reviled by history, is a fundamental part of the legend woven around the Borgia lineage.



Alexander VI

Rodrigo de Borja y de Borja, the future Pope Alexander VI, was born in Xàtiva on January 1, 1431, into a family of local minor nobility. The premature death of his father caused his entire family to move to Valencia, to the palace of his uncle Alfonso de Borja, bishop of the city.

In 1449, already a canon of the Valencia Cathedral, he was summoned to Rome by his uncle, already a cardinal, to assist him in administrative and ecclesiastical tasks, accompanied by his brother, Pedro Luis, and his cousin, Luis Juan.

Under his protection he began an unstoppable career: he was

appointed canon and cantor of the collegiate church of Xàtiva (1450) and studied law at the University of Bologna (1453).

On April 8, 1455, Alfonso de Borja is elected Pope with the name of Callixtus III and the influence of Rodrigo follows the rising trail. Despite his youth, in 1456 he was secretly appointed Cardinal and, a year later, Vice-Chancellor of the Church, a position of great influence that he held for more than 35 years.

After the death of his uncle, on August 6, 1458, Cardinal Borgia relaxes his personal habits, showing an interest in the female sex.

Around 1468, his first-born, Pedro Luis, was born to an unknown mother, followed by two sisters, Jerónima and Isabel. He later has four children with the Roman Vannozza Cattanei: Cesare (1475), Giovanni (1476), Lucrezia (1480) and Goffredo (1481). And two other sons are still known, Giovanni and Rodrigo, who he had later.

As Vice Chancellor, Rodrigo manifests an overflowing sumptuousness, complemented by the social position that all the components of the extended family are acquiring.

In 1472 he traveled to the Iberian Peninsula as a special legacy of the Pope, carrying the bull confirming the marriage of Isabella of Castile with Ferdinand II of Aragon.

Certain subsequent disagreements with Ferdinand were settled in 1485 with the purchase of the right to rule over the town of Gandia, now elevated to a royal dukedom, and with the marriage of his son, Pedro Luis, to María Enríquez, the king's first cousin.

His keen intelligence and his political ability make him one of the richest and most influential cardinals of the moment and, on the death of Innocent VIII, thanks to the division between the factions of the curia and some skilful negotiation, he is elected Pope on the 11 August 1492, under the name of

Alexander VI.

In the private sphere, the new pontiff acquires a new mistress, Giulia Farnesse, 45 years younger than he, a woman of renowned beauty.

Very soon he has to face political and territorial balances at stake with the kings of France and Naples. Like his uncle, Callixtus III, he promotes his children and relatives, always with the board of earthly power at stake.

His daughter Lucrezia will marry Giovanni Sforza, lord of Pesaro, Cesare will be appointed cardinal and will hold, among others, the rich Valencian diocese, Giovanni will end up marrying María Enríquez, the suitor of his brother Pedro Luis, who had died suddenly in 1488, and Goffredo will marry Sancha de Aragón, daughter of the king of Naples.

Lucrezia, after the annulment of her first marriage, will marry Alfonso of Aragon, natural son of Alfonso II of Naples, who is assassinated by his brother Cesare, and later with Alfonso d'Este, heir to the Duchy of Ferrara.

Tragedy knocked on his door in June 1497, after his son Giovanni, Duke of Gandia, was found dead in the waters of the Tiber.

Cesare, his most brilliant and impetuous son, who has set aside his cardinal's hat, marries Carlota d'Albret (1499), a relative of the French king, and becomes Duke of Valentinois. A possession that will mark the legend of him as Cesare il Valentino. Cesare will also be Captain General of the Church (1500) and Duke of Romagna (1501).

On Friday, August 18, 1503, after a convalescence full of all kinds of repulsive details, Alexander VI died. Rumors attributed his death to the poison he ingested at a dinner, but it was malaria, in the pestilential summer of Rome, that ended his life.

His body was provisionally buried in the chapel of Santa Maria della Febbre, next to the Vatican basilica, alongside his uncle Callixtus III. In 1601 the remains of both pontiffs were transferred to the church of the Crown of Aragon in Rome, Santa Maria in Monserrato, where they still rest.

Alexander VI promoted the evangelization of the American lands discovered in 1492, showed tolerance towards the Jews, practiced artistic patronage, surrounded himself with a circle of humanists, showed special devotion to the Virgin Mary, and bequeathed a strong and powerful papal state. On the negative side, he practiced nepotism and showed a moral disorder for which he was censured by his contemporaries.

His figure, reviled and mistreated historically, was ardently defended by the distinguished Valencian novelist Vicente Blasco Ibáñez in his book on the Borgias: "What do they hold against Alexander VI?... His crime consisted in the fact that some of his children were energetic personalities, intelligent and daring, like true Borjas, eager for power and glory; and the children of the other popes were no more than simple parasites of the Vatican, intent only on fattening themselves like leeches with the blood of the Church, selling jobs and accruing fortunes."

Saint Francisco de Borja

His life of humility and the greatness he had renounced caused admiration at the time.



Saint Francisco de Borja

Francisco de Borja y Aragón was born in Gandia (Valencia) on October 28, 1510, the result of the union between Juan de Borja, third Duke of Gandia, and Juana de Aragón. His life is already marked by the lineages from which he descends. By paternal branch that of the Borgia popes and, by maternal branch, that of Ferdinand II of Aragon.

The early death of his mother will influence the spiritual process that will accompany him throughout his life.

After a first period of training in Zaragoza, when he was only 12 years old, he was sent to Tordesillas as a page for the Infanta Catalina, the youngest daughter of Joan la Loca, who is

confined with her mother. There he remains from 1522 to 1526, to return to Zaragoza and complete his studies.

In 1528 he leaves for the court of Charles V. Francisco is seventeen years old. A year later he married Leonor de Castro, one of the ladies-in-waiting of Empress Isabella. After the wedding he is named Marquis of Llombay and Chief Equestrian of the Empress. Leonor, on her part, is appointed Chamberlain Mayor. The Borja marriage becomes the shadow of the Empress Isabella. In the court of Toledo, Francisco closes the relationship with Charles V, with whom he will forge a close friendship.

On May 1, 1539, the empress died. Charles V is dejected and Francisco is in charge of transferring her remains to Granada. The funeral procession takes 16 days to reach the city. The stench given off by the coffin and the disfigured image of the adored Isabella produce a great emotional and spiritual impact on Francisco.

Soon after, Charles V named him Viceroy of Catalonia, rewarding him for ten years in the service of the Crown.

On January 8, 1543, his father died and Francisco renounced the viceroyalty to become the IV Duke of Gandia.

His wife died in 1546 and Francisco, who had already had contact with the Jesuits since the time of the Viceroyalty, intensified his spiritual life. That same year he makes the votes of the company with a code name to keep his identity secret. Ignatius of Loyola has advised against disclosing his purpose, since "the world has no ears to hear such a din."

After obtaining a degree in Theology in 1550, the time had come to make his decision public. At the age of 39, he leaves his land and his family on August 31 and leaves for Rome.

His arrival in the city causes great expectation. The cardinals and the pope himself offer him lodging, but the duke wants to be with Ignatius of Loyola.

The news of his return to Spain spread like wildfire. Borja settles in Azpeitia (Guipúzcoa) and accepts all the tests of humility that are imposed on him, among them those of the cook's assistant. Spiritual transformation is accompanied by a physical transformation. He shaves his head and beard and takes the clerical habit on May 26, 1551.

Joan de Austria, daughter of Charles V, widow of the heir to the crown of Portugal, calls Francisco to Tordesillas. The young woman, barely 20 years old, is captivated and makes the company's vows in secret, with the code name of Mateo Sánchez.

In 1554 he was appointed general commissioner of the Company in Spain and Portugal. The duke who has become a priest begins to become the sensation of the times and everyone wants to see him preach, from the poorest to the noblest. Thanks to Francisco's work, the company experienced a notable expansion.

Charles V, already retired in Yuste, asks him to spiritually assist his mother, Queen Joan, confined in Tordesillas, whom he accompanies in her last moments.

The news of the death of Ignacio de Loyola, on July 31, 1556, caused him "loneliness and grief". Already at that time, the Society of Jesus began to have powerful enemies who questioned its work in Spain.

After the death of Charles V (1558) Philip II returned to Spain as king and Francisco perceived the misgivings of the monarch towards the Jesuits. Without the protection of his former mentor, Borja's enemies prepare the assault on his person.

On May 21, 1559, the auto de fe is celebrated in the Plaza

Mayor of Valladolid, presided over by Joan de Austria. Father Francisco's intervention saves Ana Enríquez, his daughter's sister-in-law, from death. A few months later, the Inquisition published a catalog of prohibited books, including a work attributed to Francisco de Borja. The Jesuits and their friends at court tried to defend him without success. Philip II washes his hands and the Inquisition continues with its procedure.

To the chagrin of the Spanish monarch, Francisco accepts an invitation from Cardinal Infante Enrique of Portugal and moves to the neighboring country, avoiding his possible imprisonment.

Borja remained in Portugal for almost three years until Pope Pius IV requested his presence in Rome, where he was appointed General Assistant of the Company.

After the death of the second general of the Company, Francisco de Borja is elected as the new General of the Jesuits on July 2, 1565. He is 54 years old and in poor health. As head of the Company, he completes the edition of the rules and the construction in Rome of the house and church of Saint Andrew in the Quirinal.

In 1571, a diplomatic mission takes him to the courts of Spain, Portugal and France. This long journey will become the agony of a Francisco de Borja plagued by illnesses. After a painful and eventful return, he will end up dying in Rome on September 30, 1572.

A century later, Francisco de Borja was canonized in 1671 by Pope Clement X.

His name day is celebrated on October 3.

Cesare Borgia

Image of the Renaissance prince, praised by Machiavelli and reviled by history.



Cesare Borgia

Cesare Borgia, the living image of the Renaissance prince, praised by Machiavelli and reviled by history, was the example of the intelligent politician, loved by his people and feared by his enemies, with whom he was implacable.

He was the first of the children that Cardinal Rodrigo de Borja had with Vannozza Cattanei, born in Rome in September 1475, who would be followed by Giovanni, Lucrezia and Goffredo.

When he was only six years old, he already began to receive ecclesiastical positions, a social sphere to which he had been

assigned by his father. In 1491, at the age of 16, he was appointed bishop of Pamplona.

The pontifical election of his father, in August 1492, boosted his ecclesiastical career and he received the archbishopric of Valencia and the Cistercian abbey of Valldigna. In 1493 he settles in Rome and begins to show some of the skills that will make him famous: his bearing and his wit.

Charles VIII of France, on his way through Rome in 1493, on his way to Naples, took him with him as papal legate and hostage. Cesare stars in a resounding escape that will increase his prestige. Pretending that his trip is going to be long, he organizes a large retinue loaded with luggage. The French did not think that the famous cardinal would abandon all his trousseau and lower their guard. Cesare escapes, leaving behind bundles full of stones.

On the night of June 14, 1497, Cesare said goodbye to his brother Giovanni and his body was found a few days later floating in the Tiber. Knowing the disagreements between the two brothers, the gossip echoed the accusation of fratricide that floated in the environment. They never found the culprit.

In August 1498 Cesar managed to get his demands met and passed to the secular state.

Louis XII of France, after agreeing with the pope to divorce his wife Joan of Valois, grants him the Duchy of Valentinois and marries him to Princess Carlota of Albret (1499), with whom he would have a daughter named Luisa. Although he had no recognized mistresses, he would later have two natural children, Girolamo and Camila.

At the service of the French monarch, Caesar enters Italy with his troops (1499) and during his stay in Rome maintains tense relations with Alfonso de Bisceglie, husband of his sister Lucrezia, whom he orders assassinated (1500).

That same year he expands the Borgia territories throughout

central Italy and his father grants him the title of Duke of Romagna (1501).

In this convulsive time, full of intrigues, he breaks up a conspiracy against him carried out by the Orsini, which ends in the prison and execution of the conspirators and the capture of the indomitable Catalina Sforza, whom he confines for a time in the castle of Sant'Angelo (1502).

On August 18, 1503, Alexander VI died. Cesare convalesces in the pontifical rooms, a victim of malaria. Some attributed his state of health to the poison, which his father would have also ingested.

The new Pope, Pius III, confirmed his charges, but died a few months later and was succeeded, like Julius II, by Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, the bitterest enemy of the Borgias.

Without influence and without power, he took refuge in the Castel Sant'Angelo, to embark for Naples in April 1504. But his freedom did not last long. Ferdinand II of Aragon orders his imprisonment and transfer to Spain in September of that same year.

In the peninsula he will be confined, first in Valencia, and later in the castles of Chinchilla and de la Mota (Medina del Campo). In the latter, he stars in a bizarre escape (1506) that takes him to the domain of his brother-in-law, the King of Navarre, who appoints him general of his armies.

On March 12, 1507, he died in a skirmish near Viana, where he was buried.

His body remained in the church of Santa María until the middle of the 16th century, when the Bishop of Calahorra ordered his remains to be taken out of the temple, in revenge for the murder of a family member armed in his day by the Borgias.

A model of political cunning in the eyes of Machiavelli, history

has presented him as a character without scruples or morals. But Cesare Borgia has also passed into the collective memory as the image of the Renaissance prince, cultured and of exquisite taste.

The motto that was engraved on the sword that accompanied it accurately described it: "Either Caesar or nothing".

Lucrezia Borgia

Victim of tragedies associated with her father's political interests, she piously ended her life as Duchess of Ferrara.



Lucrezia Borgia

Lucrezia Borgia was born on April 18, 1480 in Subiaco, a town about 70 kilometers from Rome. Her father, the then Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, who had relations with Vannozza Cattanei, had already had two sons, Cesare and Giovanni. Her other brother, Goffredo, would be born a year later.

At an early age she was placed in the care of Adriana Milà, the cardinal's cousin. Installed in the Orsini palace, together with

Giulia Farnese, Adriana's daughter-in-law, she was instructed as a good Renaissance lady, simultaneously practicing Spanish, Catalan and Italian. Valencian was, in fact, the colloquial language of the Borgias. Sweetness, grace, ingenuity and joy were already manifested in Lucrezia as a genetic sample of her family.

He would soon discover that their destinies would depend at all times on his father's political strategies. She was used as a bargaining chip, when she was twelve years old she had a first arranged marriage with Querubín de Centelles and Ayora, son of the counts of Oliva, which she did not crystallize.

The new interests of the already pontiff Alexander VI ended up formalizing the marriage between Lucrezia, who was barely 13 years old, and the Count of Pesaro, Giovanni Sforza, nephew of the powerful Duke of Milan and twenty years her senior. The ceremony is held in the Vatican on June 12, 1493.

Relations between Alexander VI and his son-in-law are clouded to the point of mediating a possible assassination order by the pontiff. Giovanni Sforza flees from Rome and the Vatican machinery is set in motion to base the marriage annulment on the basis of a supposed homosexuality of the husband.

The outraged husband strikes back and launches the accusation of incest, which is soon taken up and spread by the enemies of the Borgias. Pamphlets begin to appear against Alexander VI and against Lucretia, in which they speak of orgies, unrestrained sex, murders. "The biggest whore in Rome", as Lucrezia is called, starts the seed of infamies that will haunt her for centuries.

The marriage annulled on December 20, 1497, the Pope negotiates a new marriage contract for his daughter. This time with Alfonso de Aragón, Duke of Biseglia, a wedding that takes place the following year. Cesare's relations with Alfonso are not good either and in July 1500, Lucrezia's husband is the

victim of an attack in the middle of Saint Peter's Square from which he manages to survive, but during his convalescence, Cesare orders his death.

This fact deeply affects Lucrezia, who retires in strict mourning to Nepi's castle, away from all luxury and dedicated to a pious lifestyle.

Alexander VI does not miss the opportunity and negotiates a new marriage, this time with Alfonso de Este, heir to the Duke of Ferrara.

On January 6, 1502, Lucrezia said goodbye to her parents and her son Rodrigo, the fruit of her marriage to Alfonso de Aragón, whom she would never see again.

On February 2, she enters Ferrara and finds herself in a city that welcomes her with great luxury and spectacle. A population with a cultured court, with which she soon connected and that distances her from the intrigues that have led her life.

Lucrezia forges a new destiny here, which will turn her into a religious and prudent woman, with an intense Christian life, where she will spend the last stretch of her life watching her loved ones disappear from a distance. First to her father, in 1503, then to Cesare, in 1507, to his eldest son Rodrigo, in 1512, to her brother Goffredo, in 1517 and to her mother Vannozza, in 1518.

Lucrezia had six children and died at just 39 years old, on July 24, 1519.

Her body remains buried in the monastery of Corpus Domini in Ferrara, with the Franciscan tertiary habit with which she was buried, along with other members of her family.

Maria Enriquez de Luna

Widow of Giovanni Borgia and
grandmother of SaintFrancisco de Borgia.
Admirable woman, who assumes the
regency of the Duchy of Gandia with
courage and



Convento de Santa Clara (Gandía)

María Enríquez, daughter of Enrique Enríquez de Quiñones, admiral of Castile, and María de Luna, illegitimate granddaughter of the famous constable Don Álvaro, was the person appointed by Ferdinand II of Aragon, cousin of the chosen one, and the then Cardinal Rodrigo Borja to settle their disputes.

María Enríquez, born in Medina de Rioseco (Valladolid),

around 1474, would marry Pedro Luis, the cardinal's eldest son, who would become the 1st Duke of Gandia, after the purchase of the title by the Borgias in 1485.

But Pedro Luis died unexpectedly in Rome (1488), without having contracted the arranged marriage and without succession to the dukedom. His brother, Giovanni, would take care of the inheritance and the wedding commitments.

The capitulations are signed in 1488 and the wedding is celebrated in Barcelona in August 1493. The following year Juan, heir to the dukedom and future father of Saint Francisco de Borja, would be born.

The marriage did not have a happy journey. Giovanni's dissolute life, frequently reprimanded by his family, contributed to the estrangement between María and her husband. Giovanni is also very soon claimed by his father, elected pontiff, to help him in his government tasks.

The enigmatic death of the Duke of Gandia in Rome, in June 1487, leaves María Enríquez widow and regent of the Duke and his properties.

Alexander VI tries to put his son Cesare at the head of the duchy, but María Enríquez finds shelter in King Fernando, who wants to keep this territory in his sphere of influence, to break ties with his Italian family, who throw in the towel and give up their claims.

María Enríquez sold her Italian possessions and acquired other properties close to the dukedom: Miramar, Almoines, the baronies of Rugat and Albalat de la Ribera.

The widow of the duke not only increases his domains but you make it profitable and fruitful. A great patrimony that will soon be managed by her son Juan. He obtains the title of collegiate church for the parish church, granted by Alexander VI, enlarges its construction attracting great artists of the time such as Pere Compte, Damián Forment and the Italian painter

Paolo de Sanleocadio, and transfers the bodies of the first two dukes from Rome of Gandia, Pedro Luis and Juan.

After the marriage of her son in 1511, the Duchess retired to the convent of Santa Clara in Gandia, where her daughter Isabel had already entered a year earlier. She was elected abbess in 1514, resigned the position in 1519 to take refuge in Baza and get away from the revolt of the Germanías, and returned to assume it in 1530 until her death, which some authors date in 1537 and others in 1539.

With Lucrezia Borgia, whom he did not meet in person, he had a cordial and continuous correspondence, accompanied by the exchange of gifts. María sent her sweets from Gandia, luxurious shoes and silk fabrics, and she reciprocated from Ferrara with rosaries and devotional objects.

Castellnovo



The first vestiges of Castellnovo have been located in the Torre del Mal Paso mound, northwest of the town, where a Neolithic burial was found in a cave on the hillside.

Towards the 3rd century the population moved to the site of the current castle, dating back to Roman times, and called Castellnovo during the Andalusian era, with the town taking the same name.

Around 1233 the enclave was conquered by the troops of James I, who donated the place to the nobleman Berenguer d'Entença.

After passing through successive hands (Guillem d'Espluges, Roger de Lluria and the Montcadas), in the second half of the 15th century the fortress fell to Beatriz de Borja, sister of Rodrigo de Borja (Alexander VI), after marrying Jimeno Pérez de Arenós, becoming Baroness of Catellnovo.

Since they had no descendants, the place passed into the hands of the Folch de Cardona family.

The town suffered a great loss of population after the expulsion of the Moors in 1609.

In 1610, it was the great-niece of Beatriz de Borja, of the same name, who repopulated the Barony, and in 1634, Alfonso Folch de Cardona became Marquis of Castellново.

The rights passed to the Duke of Montellano in 1786 until the abolition of the manors during the first third of the 19th century.

In 1836 the town was the scene of a bloody battle between liberals and carlists.

Places of interest

Civil Architecture

Castle of Beatriz de Borja



Castle of Beatriz de Borja

This is a castle of Roman origin rebuilt during the Muslim domination, from which the name of new castle or Castellnou would come the current name of the town. The fortress was part of the defensive network of the Muslim Segorbe madina.

Conquered by the troops of James I in the middle of 1233, it would be ceded to the nobleman Berenguer d'Entença, who would retain its ownership until the end of the 13th century. In the 14th century it was sold to Guillem d'Esplugues, who raised the structure of the current building.

In the mid-15th century it passed into the hands of Beatriz de Borja, sister of Rodrigo de Borja (Alejandro VI), who had married Ximén Pérez d'Arenós. Immediately after getting married, Beatriz became Baroness of Castellnovo.

Beatriz de Borja carried out an important reform, turning it into a palace with Renaissance influences, which would serve as her residence. A double fortification surrounded the hill where the castle sits, the lower part of which has disappeared.

The Renaissance style is perceived in its vaults and pointed arches, as well as in its elaborate defenses.

The entrance portal, arranged in a corner, with a tower advanced to the left, introduces us to a central courtyard in which four rooms converge around it. The floors were paved with tiles from the 15th and 16th centuries manufactured in Manises town.

The Tower of Homage is preserved from the upper enclosure, with large windows that were made during its transformation as a palace.

Years later with the donation of the Barony and castle to the Folch de Cardona, works would be carried out again.

The Carlist wars first and the Civil War later, caused a progressive deterioration. The recent restorations have brought to light the old Renaissance trace promoted by Beatriz de Borja.

Arab Cistern



Arab Cistern

The Castellnovo cistern, built by the Arabs around the 12th century, is one of the best examples of Islamic hydraulic engineering in the Alto Palancia region.

The cistern was designed taking advantage of the unevenness of the terrain. The entire complex was later covered, forming a replacement, within the walls of the town, where the rim and access to the water enclosure are located.

The well, about 8 meters in diameter and about 10.5 meters deep, is accessed by a steep stone-slab staircase. Next to it there is a small chamber, formed by a semicircular vault attached to the wall. Close to the well there is a basin in the shape of an arch for the service of filling vessels and jugs.

The interior of the tank was covered several times with lime mortar to protect, clean up and prevent leaks.

Next to the cistern you can see part of the walled enclosure of the town. It is believed that he had communication with the castle

The cistern has provided service until the middle of the 20th century. The night watchman was in charge the doors opening as well as monitoring the service.

Tower del Mal Paso



Tower del Mal Paso

The tower, located on the top of a mound northwest of the current town, is part of the first traces of human occupation in Castellnovo.

An Aeneolithic burial was found in a 27-meter-long cave and at the top, next to the tower, are the remains of an Iberian settlement, which was left uninhabited around the 3rd century,

Its strategic position meant that the place was used as a watchtower until the Middle Ages, as a link with the castle of Segorbe.

Off route

Calvary



Calvary

The calvary is located on the path that goes up to the hermitages of San Antonio and San Cristóbal, marked out by fourteen small masonry chapels with lime plaster and Arabic tiles, it includes a stop from the Good Friday procession.

In its surroundings appeared a total of 28 burials of Muslim origin, belonging to an Islamic cemetery dated between the 8th and 13th centuries.

Hermitage of San Antón



Hermitage of San Antón

In the urban nucleus, on San Antonio street, is this small hermitage dedicated to San Antonio Abad.

The hermitage, with whitewashed masonry walls, is covered with tiles on a single slope towards the street.

The entrance door is made of wood with a peephole under a semicircular arch.

Its interior is vaulted, separated into two sections by an arch starting from pilasters. On a simple shelf in the front is the small image of the owner.

The Festival of San Antonio Abad is celebrated on January 17 and is one of the festivals that, due to its tradition, is one of the most important in Castellново.

The Palm Sunday procession leaves from its doors.

Hermitage of San Antonio de Padua



Hermitage of San Antonio de Padua

At the beginning of the ascent to Mount San Cristóbal, there is the hermitage of San Antonio de Padua, built in 1724, with an architectural style very similar to that of San Cristóbal, located in the upper part of the mount.

This religious building has an atrium protecting the lintelled entrance door, as a refuge for parishioners and visitors.

On the altar there is a baroque carving from the 17th century, one meter high, which represents the holder. One of the few hermitage images that were able to escape the looting of the Spanish civil war.

Inside the hermitage you can read the miracle of San Antonio, which narrates how the saint, during its childhood, locked up all the birds in a room to protect the crops. Later he gave them all freedom, following a rigorous order, and once outside, the birds prepared to listen to San Antonio.

Hermitage of San Cristóbal



Hermitage of San Cristóbal

On the top of the San Cristóbal hill, at an altitude of 571 meters, stands this hermitage from the 15th century, fully restored in 1977.

The entrance is protected by a spacious atrium, to shelter pilgrims and visitors.

Its long interior space, divided into four sections, is extended on the left side with three empty chapels with independent roofs.

To the left, the buttresses, extended on the outside, shelter three chapels that break the rectangular plan of the hermitage. Two of these had a door in the border wall and everything suggests that they were cells or chapels for hermits.

The hermitage has no sacristy, no choir, and no altars in the chapels. The first chapel, entering to the left, houses a small painting of San Cristóbal, patron saint of all travelers, boatmen and motorists.

Attached to the temple, on the part of the apse, there is

another room that can serve as a retreat. We also find a large cistern that collects the river water.

The square with a balcony allows you to look the fertile basin of the Palancia river on its way to the Mediterranean Sea, with the Sierra Calderona Natural Park in the background.

The hermitage is the largest of the three existing in the town.

Church of los Santos Reyes



Church of los Santos Reyes

The primitive parish church of Castellnovo was located in what is now the town's mill, in the Plaza del Olmo itself.

At the express wish of Beatriz de Borja, attending to family devotion, the church was placed under the dedication of the Holy Kings. In 1507, when the Gandía collegiate church was expanded, María Enríquez, widow of Juan de Borja, had already decided to offer its main chapel to this dedication.

On the semicircular arch of the main door there is a stone inscription that confirms the date of construction of the new temple: September 24, 1662.

Subsequently, the church was reformed in the 18th century, giving it a transept, decorated with wall paintings of the time.

The Renaissance-style building, with a Latin cross plan, is organized into three naves with side chapels and divided into five sections.

In the side chapels are located five altars dedicated to San Antonio Abad, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Holy Christ of Agony,

Virgin of Agony and the Sorrowful and the Reclining Christ.

The tower, topped with a dome with green ceramic tiles, is part of the façade and consists of two bodies.

Place of la Mina



Place of la Mina

The area of La Mina is located in the vicinity of the town, next to the regional road that leads to the town of Almedijar, on the site where previously, in 1730, there was a silver mine.

With its high-quality fountain and a spacious pine forest, it has become a place for recreation and picnic area,

The space is divided into two parts. The first, at road level, where the large pine forest and the different picnic areas with bar service are located. The second space, at the bottom, surrounded by poplars, contains the low mineralized water spring, which has supplied the population since 1916.



BORJA-BORGIA: ITINERARY OF A UNIVERSAL FAMILY

Actividad subvencionada por el
Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte



Travelling with the Borgia © Copyright 2023. All rights reserved